

Master's Student Handbook

Welcome to San Diego State University! This handbook provides an overview of masters-level graduate programs and policies at SDSU. For additional information, please visit the Graduate Studies office in Student Service East 1410, call 619-594-5213 during business hours (Monday - Thursday, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM), or email us at [<gra@sdsu.edu>](mailto:gra@sdsu.edu). Information on graduate student forms and petitions are also available on our website: <http://grad.sdsu.edu>

Dean's Welcome

Welcome to San Diego State University's College of Graduate Studies!

SDSU's graduate programs have played an integral role in SDSU's mission of excellence in academics, research, and service. A federally designated Hispanic-serving Institution residing on Kumeyaay land, SDSU is known for its long-standing efforts advancing diversity and inclusion through its nationally recognized excellence in many graduate programs including speech, language and hearing sciences, public health, engineering, clinical psychology, biology, education, creative writing, and musical theatre, to name just a few.

You will join over 5,000 graduate scholars who are engaged in over 175 master's, doctoral, credential, and advanced certificate programs at San Diego State University, a community of one of the most racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse academic communities in the nation which aims to prepare the next generation of scholars, researchers, practitioners, and leaders.

As a graduate student at SDSU, you will face many exciting and rewarding challenges. The College of Graduate Studies serves as an advocate and resource for graduate education on our campus, provides leadership and support to scholars, and is committed to providing graduate students an environment where you can thrive.

Although there is a great deal to learn within the discipline that you have chosen to study, I hope you will take the time to interact with faculty and students from the larger community of scholars at the university. You have a wealth of expertise at your fingertips by way of mentors, advisors, and the rich environment of support that SDSU offers.

Throughout your course of study, The College of Graduate Studies is here to support you. We are dedicated to working with units across campus and, for those of you in joint doctoral programs, our partner institutions, to support your academic needs and provide the tools you need for success.

You are now part of an amazing network of faculty, students, and alumni. Thank you for choosing SDSU.

Congratulations, and again, welcome to SDSU.



Tracy Love, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Graduate Studies

Graduate Student Responsibilities

All graduate students are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures of San Diego State University. Please become familiar with the information outlined in the University Catalog. Although some *operational* procedures described in the University Catalog may change over time, your specific *degree requirements* correspond to the Catalog year you were admitted to your graduate program. Note that any degree adjustments or course substitutions must be supported by your program's Graduate Advisor, approved by Graduate Studies, and encoded in your student record.

Current and past catalogs are available online at: <http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/catalog/bulletin/>

Graduate Advisor

Every master's program has at least one Graduate Advisor who is responsible for all matters, from admission to academic advising and graduation. The Graduate Advisor may be known as the Program Director in a doctoral program, although the single term "Graduate Advisor" will be used throughout his handbook. In some programs, the advisor is assisted by a staff member or other faculty for specific tasks. A list of all advisors can be found here:

<https://grad.sdsu.edu/current-students/advisor-list>

SDSUid

Your "SDSUid" is your SDSU student email account. Students are required to obtain an @sdsu.edu email account, and it is used in the SDSUid single sign on process. "Single sign on" means that many electronic systems can be accessed through your web browser without logging in through separate accounts. Instructions on how to obtain your email account can be found at <http://it.sdsu.edu/sdsuid/student-activation.aspx>. An activation email will be sent to the personal email address (e.g., jdoe@yahoo.com) that you provided when you applied. You will be able to set a new SDSUid password and complete the SDSUid/Microsoft Office 365 activation process. Student accounts remain active as long as a student's status is active.

*Note: If you are also an academic employee (e.g., GA, TA, etc.), you will be provided with a *second* SDSU email, which is an SDSU employee role email address. This address will be different from your student email address. The employee email address will be deactivated at the end of your 12-month contract, so we recommend that you use this email address only for employment-related matters.

California Residency

California state law distinguishes between residents and nonresidents for tuition purposes. Students classified as nonresidents for tuition purposes pay an additional per-unit fee (refer to the current [Tuition and Fees](#) schedule).

If you are a domestic out-of-state student, it is your responsibility to obtain California residency after the first year. Otherwise, you will be required to pay nonresident tuition unless other arrangements are made. We recommend that you begin the process to establish residency immediately following your arrival in California. Visit this website for more information:

https://registrar.sdsu.edu/_resources/pdf/Residence_Reclassification_Request_Instructions.pdf

The [Office of Graduate Life and Diversity Links](#) offers workshops to help students understand the process of establishing California residency. Details on those workshops can be found by clicking [here](#).

Effective Fall 2023, incoming out-of state and international students as well as future incoming cohorts, are required to pay an additional per-semester flat fee, each semester until graduation (refer to the current [Tuition and Fees](#) schedule). Non-resident students serving as Teaching Associates (TAs) will be exempt from paying the Out of State and International Student Fee. This is subject to obtaining proper authority following CSU established policy/procedures with UAW, which is in process.

Parking

Students can purchase permits, pay citations, appeal citations and manage their parking account all on the [Aztec Parking Portal](#). Please make sure to have your vehicle information prior to purchasing a permit as it will be required the first time you register in the portal.

Registration and Enrollment

EMPL ID Number and SDSU Card

When you applied to San Diego State University, you were issued a nine-digit student identification number, currently called a EMPL ID number. Your EMPL ID number begins with a 1. This number will be used by offices and departments across campus to identify you and locate your records. In previous years, students were given a Red ID which started with an '8'. Your EMPL ID is used to identify you in almost all electronic systems. The legacy RedID numbers (beginning with 8) still work in some systems, but only the newer number (beginning with 1) is accepted in most cases.

If you do not know your EMPL ID, visit this site: <https://my.sdsu.edu/guides/locating-identification-number>.

How to get an SDSUcard:

- Register to create an account using your SDSU ID (= SDSU student email address) at get.cbord.com
- Download "GET" mobile app to your cell phone
- Upload a photo AND government issued ID using the [GET](#) mobile app. View [YouTube video](#) for instructions
- Email the SDSU card office regarding pick up of the card at sdsucard@sdsu.edu
- Note: *Graduate Students with Teacher Assistant privileges will be issued SDSU cards identified as GRADUATE student. Grad Students designated as Staff employees of San Diego State University by an authorized Human Resources representative will be indicated as STAFF on their SDSU cards.*

Visit this [link](#) for more information about the SDSUcard.

Registration through my.SDSU

Registration at San Diego State University is administered through the Office of the Registrar. In nearly all cases, you will register online through my.SDSU. Click [here](#) to access the **my.sdsu** registration guide. Each semester, students will be assigned a registration window to sign up for the upcoming

semester's courses. Students can view their registration window through [my.SDSU](https://my.sdsu.edu). For additional information regarding registration and records, contact the Office of the Registrar at 619-594-6871 or [<registrar@sdsu.edu>](mailto:registrar@sdsu.edu).

Minimum registration requirements

The minimum number of units you must register for will depend on your residency, scholarship support, employment, and other factors. Please review the Registration Requirements handout, which is posted on the College of Graduate Studies [Degree Completion Plan web page](#).

Student Finances

Student Account Services

Student Account Services maintains student financial accounts and is responsible for billing items such as university housing, mandatory lab fees, and financial aid overpayment obligations. Their office is located in Student Services West room 2536 and can be reached on their website at:

<https://bfa.sdsu.edu/financial/student/contact>.

Additional information on a wide variety of student financial issues is available here: <https://student-accounts.sdsu.edu/>

Starting in Fall 2022, students are required to use my.SDSU to access financial aid information, pay student bills, and sign up for direct deposit. For more information on my.SDSU please visit:

<https://my.sdsu.edu/>

Your Bill

Your Student Account Services bill includes many different educational costs:

1. Basic tuition (sometimes referred to as "California resident tuition" or "in-state tuition")
2. Nonresident tuition and fees (for those who are not California residents)
3. Mandatory student fees
4. Professional program fees (in some graduate programs)
5. Other miscellaneous and optional fees.

Although many scholarships, fellowships, and grants can be applied to your total bill, some can only be used for specific items. For example, the *State University Grant* and the *TA part-time in-state tuition waiver* can only be used as credit for Basic Tuition.

Financial Support

* Students must be enrolled in at least 5 units per semester in order to be eligible for financial aid.

For information on additional financial support, please visit this website: <https://grad.sdsu.edu/financial-support>. Here are some highlights:

- The *Graduate Equity Fellowship* program provides support for economically disadvantaged graduate students, especially from groups who are underrepresented within their respective disciplines. Only legal residents of the State of California who can demonstrate significant financial need of \$1,000 are eligible, as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form (FAFSA).

Recipients must be classified or conditionally classified graduate students, maintain a 3.00 GPA, and must be enrolled for a minimum of six units of graduate coursework each semester they hold the fellowship. Fellowships range from \$500 to \$2,000 for an academic year depending on the demonstrated need. Students may receive awards for a maximum of two academic years, but they must apply each year. Post-baccalaureate students are ineligible.

Interested students should complete an application and a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, available online at www.fafsa.gov. Those eligible for the CA Dream Act application can apply online at <https://dream.csac.ca.gov/>.

- The *Presidential Graduate Research Fellowship* is a faculty nominated fellowship available for students who are not California residents. Students must be nominated by their graduate program advisor/director for these awards. Nominations are typically requested in spring for distribution the following academic year. Students are granted a *Non-Resident Tuition Waiver* (NRTW) at the time of admission. The NRTW covers the extra tuition fee paid by international and non-Californians for attending a California State University. A very limited number of NRTWs are available, and they are awarded only to incoming graduate students at the time of admission. Students with a NRTW must keep their GPA at 3.00 or above, or risk losing the NRTW. The NRTW may be renewed for up to five semesters. The NRTW only covers the Fall and Spring semesters.
- The *California Pre-Doctoral Scholarship Program* targets students who have experienced economic and educational disadvantages and intend to apply to a Doctoral program. The program supports upper division undergraduate students, and current (non-PhD) graduate students. The program places a special emphasis on increasing the number of CSU students who enter Doctoral programs at one of the University of California institutions. Students chosen for this award are designated Sally Casanova Scholars. Recipients receive direct guidance from CSU faculty members and receive funding for travel, development (broadly defined), and summer research experience (at any U.S. major research university). For more information, contact Graduate Studies or visit <https://www.calstate.edu/csuo-system/faculty-staff/predoc>
- *Many additional scholarships and financial aid opportunities* are available to San Diego State University graduate students. Contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships or visit http://go.sdsu.edu/student_Studies/financialaid/Default.aspx

Graduate Student Employment

For graduate students, instructional employment is almost always coordinated by the academic department of the corresponding course, and graduate programs associated with that department. Research-based employment is the responsibility of the faculty (or other university member) who oversees the research grant or contract. Open employment opportunities are posted here: <https://bfa.sdsu.edu/hr/jobs/job-opportunities>

Per the [CSU](#), graduate students are not expected to work more than 20 hours per week (0.5 appointment) for all appointments combined. Campus employment exceeding 20 hours per week is generally expected to impede good progress to degree completion. Exception requests must be reviewed by the hiring unit, which is typically the academic college Dean's office, and forwarded by that unit to the College of Graduate Studies for a decision.

The table below summarizes the ways in which graduate students can be hired. The most commonly used hiring categories for graduate students at SDSU are noted by the superscript # in the table below.

Funding Source	Classification	Teaching/ Instructional duties?	Research duties?	Other duties?	Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) unit
State-side position	#TA = Teaching Associate♦	Yes	Maybe	No	UAW 11 *
	#GA = Graduate Assistant♦ (5, 10, 15 or 20 hours a week- set schedule)	Yes	Yes	Yes	UAW 11 *
	#ISA = Instructional Student Assistant♦ (paid for actual hours worked)	Yes	No	No	UAW 11 *
	#SA = Student Assistant♦	No	No	Yes	Non represented
Research Foundation position	JDP scholar	No	Yes	Yes	Non represented
	GA = Graduate Assistant	No	Yes	Yes	Non represented
	RA = Research Assistant	No	Yes	No	Non represented
State-side position	#Research fellow exempt [‡] and non-exempt♦ options	No	Yes	No	Non represented
	Instructor → Global Campus	Yes	No	No	Unit 3
	Facilitator → Global Campus	Yes	No	No	Unit 3

[‡] exempt employee = does not receive overtime pay

♦ non-exempt employee = entitled to straight time when they work hours that exceed their current FTE and time and half when they work over 40 hours

Graduate Teaching Associate

Appointments as graduate teaching associates, known more commonly as TAs, provide students the opportunity to participate directly in the teaching activities of the university. Indeed, faculty members in many programs consider such appointments an integral part of the academic curriculum for their graduate students. Under the supervision of senior faculty, TAs provide direct instruction to undergraduate students, primarily at the lower division level. Appointments as graduate TAs are available to qualified graduate students in all doctoral programs, and many master's programs. Graduate TAs must be admitted to San Diego State University with classified or conditionally classified graduate standing.

Appointments may be for a period of either one semester or the academic year. Continuation and reappointment are dependent on good standing, good progress, departmental need, relevant skills and satisfactory teaching performance. Information concerning an appointment as a graduate teaching associate may be obtained from the head of the department, school, or college in which the applicant wishes to obtain the advanced degree.

Graduate Assistant

Graduate assistants (GA) provide instructionally related services to undergraduate students or they may be assigned duties that directly support faculty research activities. Graduate assistants are available in most San Diego State University departments and schools. Graduate assistants must be admitted to SDSU with classified or conditionally classified graduate standing.

Appointments may be for a period of either one semester or the academic year. Continuation and reappointment are dependent on good progress, departmental need, relevant skills and satisfactory completion of assigned duties. Information concerning appointment as a graduate assistant may be

obtained from the head of the department, school, or college in which the applicant wishes to obtain the advanced degree.

Instructional Student Assistant (ISA)

Graduate students are eligible for employment as student assistants, who perform a wide variety of tasks supporting faculty and staff across the university. Assistants are paid by the hour and are restricted to assignments not to exceed 20 hours per week. Information concerning an appointment as a student assistant may be obtained from the head of the department, school, or college in which the applicant wishes to obtain the advanced degree.

Research Assistant (SDSU Research Foundation)

Some graduate students obtain part-time employment as research assistants. Research assistants work directly with faculty in a laboratory or other research facility. Although research assistants are employees of the SDSU Research Foundation, they are generally hired directly by faculty members seeking assistance for specific research programs.

Students may inquire about such appointments through the appropriate faculty in their program, the chair or director of the respective department, or the Office of Human Resources of the SDSU Research Foundation. Those interested in adding their names to a list of candidates for current or future openings may obtain application materials from the San Diego State University Research Foundation, Gateway Building, 5250 Campanile Drive, San Diego, CA 92182-1945. Further information may also be available on faculty and department websites.

Know Your Status

Main Campus vs. Global Campus programs

Most graduate programs are *state-supported Main Campus* programs in which students use the administrative services that are found in various offices in Student Services East and West. Most courses that apply to graduate degrees are state-supported. Enrollment in state-supported graduate courses requires [admission](#) to SDSU in an appropriate graduate program.

The *SDSU Global Campus* is located in the Extended Studies/Gateway Centers on the southern edge of campus. SDSU Global Campus offers more than 50 certificate programs, 20 bachelor's and master's programs, English language programs, and many other learning opportunities locally, regionally, and around the world.

Students in Global Campus graduate programs that are offered only during summer session must attend a minimum of three summers to earn their degree. All graduate programs offered by SDSU Global Campus are required to be financially self-supporting. Fees for classes and seminars vary with the course offering. Some classes, credit and noncredit, may carry additional costs for field trips, materials, etc. Fees are subject to change without notice. More information about the programs offered can be found here: <https://ces.sdsu.edu/areas-of-study>

Individuals who have not been formally admitted to a graduate program may register for certain courses through SDSU Global Campus (also known as taking courses through "Open University"). However, keep in mind that you cannot earn a graduate degree by taking courses through Open University/Global Campus. To earn a degree, you must be admitted into a degree program. For most Master's degrees, you

can transfer no more than nine units that were taken before you officially started the program (= “matriculated” into the program). Similarly, students who are pursuing an advanced certificate must be admitted to and matriculate in the program before completing an excess of non-matriculated units (consult the graduate program or College of Graduate Studies for specific unit limits). Students who complete an excessive number of units prior to officially starting a graduate program will be required to repeat some coursework.

Completing a certificate through Global Campus does not automatically transfer into a main campus graduate program, and there are limits to the number of units students can transfer into the program or double count. Review the Catalog entries for both the Certificate and Master’s degree that you may be interested in pursuing. If “double counting” the same course for both degrees is permitted, it will be described in the Catalog.

Conditional Admission vs. Classified

Every master’s student is admitted to SDSU with a specific classification: classified or conditional. Students admitted with *classified standing* have met all university and program requirements for admission. Classified students are fully eligible to proceed with courses for their graduate program of study and should not be required to take any prerequisites or meet any additional requirements beyond those listed in the Catalog for all students in the program. Students *admitted conditionally* have not met all program requirements for admission. Conditionally admitted students are typically required to take prerequisite or foundational courses and/or maintain a minimum GPA during their first 1-2 semesters of attendance. The specific conditions are set by the student's Graduate Advisor and approved by the College of Graduate Studies. If you have been admitted conditionally, your graduate advisor should inform you of your specific conditions and when they must be completed. Students’ degree audits (see section below on “Program of Study and Degree Evaluation”) will indicate if they are conditional and the conditions that need to be satisfied. Once these conditions are met, the graduate advisor must submit a Change of Status form to change the student’s status from conditional to classified. Students who do not meet their admissions conditions may be dismissed from their graduate program.

As described below, a graduate student's status will later change from *Classified* to *Advanced to Candidacy*, when the necessary conditions to be advanced have been fulfilled.

Graduate Student “Good Standing”

Criteria for Graduate Student “Good Standing” are listed in the [University Catalog](#). Graduate students are considered to be in Good Standing with the College of Graduate Studies if they:

- Maintain good academic standing with the university (based on cumulative GPA),
- Are in good judicial standing (as defined by the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities),
- Make continued good progress toward the degree each semester (as defined by the graduate program),
- Maintain matriculation (enroll in classes or file Leave of Absence, each Fall and Spring semester).

Good academic standing (the first criteria in this list) is maintained with grade requirements 2 and 3 in the next section (“Grade Requirements”). Failure to maintain good academic standing will result in academic probation, and possible disqualification. See the section of the Catalog titled [University Policies: Probation and Disqualification \(Graduate Students\)](#) for detailed information regarding the timeframe and requirements for avoiding disqualification.

Grade Requirements

There are five sets of grade requirements for graduate students. All five sets of grade requirements must be met in order to advance to candidacy and to graduate.

1. A minimum grade of C for every course used towards the degree. Some degree programs require higher grades for some or all courses (see your program's requirements in the [Catalog](#)).
2. The post-baccalaureate SDSU cumulative GPA^{a,b} must be 3.00 or higher.
3. The post-baccalaureate overall cumulative GPA^{a,c} must be 3.00 or higher.
4. The SDSU Program of Study GPA^b must be 3.00 or higher.
5. The overall Program of Study GPA^c must be 3.00 or higher.

^aThe post-baccalaureate GPA (often referred to as "cumulative GPA") is calculated using all graded courses listed on the SDSU transcripts after the student has earned a Bachelor's degree, regardless of whether or not the courses are applied towards the degree you are currently pursuing, and whether or not they are graduate-level courses.

The "post-baccalaureate SDSU cumulative GPA" and "post-baccalaureate overall cumulative GPA" are usually identical, and are both referred to as "the cumulative GPA" by most campus staff and faculty.

^bThe SDSU GPA (sometimes called "campus GPA") calculations use all SDSU courses: San Diego Main Campus, Imperial Valley Campus, and Global Campus (whether Special Sessions or Open University).

^cThe overall GPA calculations are calculated using all SDSU courses, plus transfer courses that have been formally recognized by the SDSU College of Graduate Studies and appear on the SDSU transcripts.

Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) Grading

As described in the [University Catalog](#), a grade of Credit does not fulfill graduation requirements if the course has a letter grade option. (The graduate advisor may recommend an exception to this policy during a semester designated by the Registrar's office as COVID-impacted on the SDSU transcripts, but is not obligated to.)

At least 70% of the units used toward a master's degree program must be letter graded.

Report in Progress and Withdrawal

Report in Progress Grade - RP

The RP symbol is used in connection with courses that extend beyond one academic term. It indicates that work is in progress and has been evaluated and found to be satisfactory to date, but that assignment of a precise grade must await completion of additional work. Work is to be completed within a stipulated time period not to exceed one year except for graduate thesis (799A) or dissertation (899). An additional exception shall be made for Research (797) in which time period is not to exceed two years. Graduate courses for which the RP symbol is appropriate are specifically designated in the departmental listings of the catalog.

Candidates for graduation whose record carries a grade of RP will be graduated provided they are otherwise eligible for graduation. However, the RP cannot be made up after the degree has been granted. If students do not wish to be graduated with the grade of RP on their record, they must officially cancel their application for graduation.

Withdrawal Grade - W

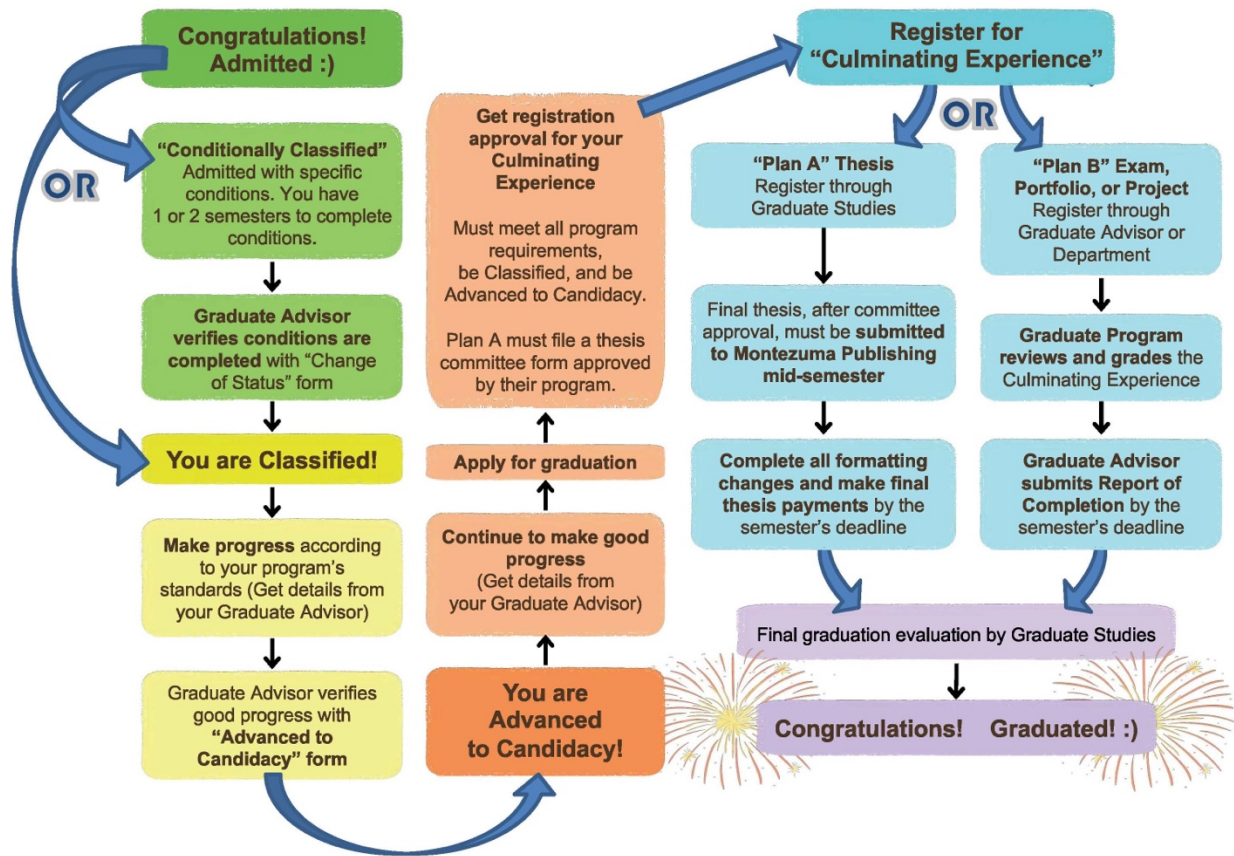
The symbol “W” indicates that you were permitted to drop a course after the University Census date for that term because of a verified serious and compelling reason, and you have obtained the approval of the dean or designee of your college. See *Official Withdrawal* section in the University Catalog for more information.

Unauthorized Withdrawal Grade - WU

The grade WU may be entered by an instructor for a student who was passing the course, but then stopped attending and did not complete all course requirements. WU is treated in the same way as F for GPA calculations.

The “Life Cycle” of a Master’s Student

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A MASTER'S STUDENT



The Degree Evaluation and the “Program of Study”

The Program of Study (POS) is a list of the specific courses a student is using to satisfy their requirements for the degree. Students should consult their graduate advisor to plan their Program of Study, usually during the first semester in their graduate program. Degree requirements are officially documented in the corresponding Catalog chapter. The requirements fall into several categories:

- Specific required courses.
- A set of courses that students may choose from. This set may be called “electives” if it is very broad, or the program may give the set a field-specific name.
- A set of courses that students may choose from, with advisor approval. If you see the phrase “advisor approval” associated with degree requirements, obtain approval from your graduate advisor prior to registering.
- Additional requirements that apply to the entire program of study, regardless of whether the courses are required or electives. For example, there are overall limits to how many Cr/NC units may be used in your degree, and limits to how many units can be numbered 500-599.

The Degree Evaluation online system, which is accessed initially through the "Degree Evaluation" tile on your my.SDSU home page, provides you with an individualized report of progress towards degree.

Each graduate student begins their graduate program with a “blank” Program of Study as reflected in the Degree Evaluation. The courses you take will then automatically populate different sections. Students should regularly run an “audit” of their program of study to ensure they are on track to completing degree requirements (which is specific to the catalog for their semester of admission). Any changes to a student’s Program of Study must be requested by submitting a [Petition for Adjustment of Academic Requirements \(PAAR\) form](#). The student will complete the PAAR with the Graduate Advisor, who will submit the form electronically for final review and approval with the College of Graduate Studies. After approval, students will receive a notification to their SDSU email.

Advancement to Candidacy

Your “Student Status” must change from *Classified* to *Advanced to Candidacy* **before you can complete your degree**. A student who has been *advanced to candidacy* is officially recognized by the university as a candidate for the degree. In order to be advanced to candidacy, a student must have completed a minimum number of POS units and meet minimum grade requirements (see *Grade Requirements* section above). Students are then approved for advancement to candidacy by their program’s Graduate Advisor.

Students can initiate the Advancement to Candidacy Request via [Graduate eForms](#). The form will be routed to the appropriate graduate advisor and upon approval, be routed to Graduate Studies for final processing. (Note that this can take 7-10 business days to be processed). Graduate advisors can also initiate the form as well on the student’s behalf through the [advisor link to the eForms](#).

After advancement to candidacy, the student becomes eligible to file the Appointment of Thesis/Project Committee form in preparation for enrollment in thesis (Plan A), or to complete the Plan B culminating experience (often, it is a comprehensive examination). Refer to the University Catalog for a list of advancement requirements, and exceptions to the rules listed above.

Appointment of Thesis/Project Committee

After advancement to candidacy, master's students are required to select their thesis/dissertation committees and file the [Appointment of Thesis/Project Committee form](#).

Please note the following:

- The Graduate Advisor must also submit a Data Rights Agreement signed by the thesis chair if the data rights do not exclusively belong to the student. This must be provided to Graduate Studies as a supporting document to the thesis committee packet.
- Students should contact the [IRB Office](#) / [IACUC office](#) to obtain verification if their research involves testing on human and animal subjects. This verification must be provided to Graduate Studies as a supporting document to the thesis committee packet.
- A very specific set of rules restricts who may (and may not) serve on your committee. Consult with your program's Graduate Advisor to find out about program-specific guidelines or if you have any questions. Students with committee members that are not tenured/tenure track faculty at SDSU will also need to complete the [Petition for Lecturers, Adjuncts, and Outside Experts Without SDSU Affiliation to Serve on Thesis Committees](#). Please read the form in its entirety, as additional documentation may be required to accompany this petition.

Culminating experiences: Plan A or Plan B

All master's students complete a “culminating experience” at the end of their program. This final step is satisfied through either the Plan A or Plan B option.

Plan A (Thesis or Project)

Plan A is completed with a thesis that will be published in the San Diego State Library. A thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem; it states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and the methods of gathering information, and analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization, language, and format, high level of writing competency, and thorough documentation.

Your thesis will be supervised by a faculty committee consisting of two members from your department, and one from another SDSU department. It is never too early to start thinking about your thesis committee! Identify faculty members you work well with, and that specialize in your area of interest.

(Note: A small number of programs require their Plan A students to complete and publish a comprehensive project that does not take the form of a traditional thesis.)

Plan B (Comprehensive Examination or other requirement)

Students pursuing Plan B will complete a comprehensive written examination in lieu of the thesis. The comprehensive examination (aka “comps”) is an assessment of your ability to integrate knowledge of your subject area, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. Your graduate program will administer your comprehensive examination. Examination procedures, dates, and guidelines vary, so consult with your graduate advisor early and often regarding how to prepare.

Registering for culminating experience coursework (790, 795, 797, 799A/799B)

In some master's programs, a specific course is associated with the culminating experience (for example: 790, 795 or 797). Certain graduate programs only allow graduate students who have been advanced to candidacy to register for these courses. For Plan A students, once the thesis committee is approved, the student will be placed on a class list to have their specific section of 799A/799B/799C created by the Office of the Registrar. Once Graduate Studies receives the class number, they will reach out directly to the student through their SDSU student email account to provide further registration information.

Applying for graduation

Graduation is not automatic upon completion of your degree requirements!

You must declare your intention to graduate by filing an Application for Graduation with an Advanced Degree. The application is due 3-6 months before the official diploma date. Application deadlines are emailed to students campus-wide, posted in the Graduate Studies office, and on the Graduate Studies web page:

<https://grad.sdsu.edu/announcements-and-deadlines>

Applications are submitted through your my.SDSU account, and a \$103 fee is required (subject to changes). If you do not graduate in the term that you applied for, your application for graduation will automatically be rolled over to the following term. No action needs to be taken.

If you have missed the deadline for graduation applications, email Graduate Studies <gra@sdsu.edu> to determine whether it is possible to petition for a late application.

To graduate, all five sets of grade requirements must be met.

Again, ***Graduation is not automatic*** upon the completion of degree requirements.

Rather, you must declare your intent to graduate by submitting an Application for Graduation with an Advanced Degree. The application for graduation is a **2-step process**.

- 1) Students must apply through [my.SDSU](#) by selecting the application for graduation option under the Academic Records tile. As students proceed through the application process, they will be prompted to pay a one-time \$103 non-refundable application fee.
- 2) After the application fee has been paid, students must navigate back into their application to formally submit the application.

Plan B Master's students

Plan B students cannot take their comprehensive examination (or other culminating experience) until after they have been Advanced to Candidacy.

After passing your comprehensive examination, your program must submit the *Report for Final Exam or Thesis Defense form* to Graduate Studies.

Plan A Master's students

1. Most Plan A master's degree programs require a thesis defense (format varies by program).
2. Thesis publication through Montezuma Publishing is required for all Plan A master's students included (format varies by program). Publication means submission to Montezuma Publishing by the posted deadline, implementing any necessary formatting changes, resubmitting the revised version to Montezuma Publishing, and paying all final fees. The thesis is not considered to be "published" until all fees are paid. Please review the thesis deadlines in the Graduation Deadlines flyer posted on the Graduate Studies web page; these deadlines are strict. <https://grad.sdsu.edu/announcements-and-deadlines>
3. After writing the thesis, most graduate students finish editing and formatting it themselves. But some choose to pay an independent formatter for editing and formatting services. Montezuma Publishing can also be hired for editing/formatting services if you wish. Regardless of which option you choose, the thesis must be properly formatted when you submit to Montezuma Publishing for a final formatting review.
4. Carefully review each section of Montezuma Publishing's instruction page to plan for the necessary thesis fees: <https://www.montezumapublishing.com/sdsuthesisdissertation>
 - a) Optional: if you choose to hire Montezuma Publishing or an outside person for formatting/editing services, research the costs and turnaround times.
 - b) Unless you hire Montezuma Publishing for formatting services, a review fee will be required when you submit the thesis. This fee is currently **\$50**, but check the *Review Procedures* section of the Montezuma Publishing web page for the current amount.

- c) When you publish the approved thesis through Montezuma Publishing, a final publication fee pays for ProQuest submission, an electronic file, metadata file, and abstract for SDSU Library. This fee is currently **\$45**, but check the *Publishing* section of the Montezuma Publishing web page for the current amount (about halfway down that web page).
 - d) Physical copies of your thesis can be purchased for yourself, committee members or a department library. See the *Publishing* section of the Montezuma Publishing web page for pricing (about halfway down that web page).
5. 799A and 799B registration
- 799A and 799B registration for Plan A master's students serves a number of purposes. International students might need it on their transcripts to demonstrate that they are active. Many (but not all) faculty or departments on campus require 799A or 799B registration if the student will be using any faculty time. The most important 799A / 799B requirement is for Montezuma Publishing.
 - Plan A Master's students must be registered in 799A or 799B in the semester that they submit their formatted thesis to Montezuma Publishing. Montezuma Publishing cannot accept submission if the student is not registered for 799A or 799B at that moment.
 - If thesis writing, committee review, defense and submission to Montezuma Publishing stretch out over multiple semesters, then 799A / 799B registration will be necessary in multiple semesters. For example, if you are registered in 799A but do not submit your thesis to Montezuma Publishing by the last day of the semester, you must register for 799B in the semester when you eventually submit.
6. The final version of the thesis must be approved by the student's thesis committee and the cover page signed by all committee members.
 7. Some Plan A programs require the *Report for Final Exam or Thesis Defense form* to be filed with Graduate Studies. Ask your Graduate Advisor if your program requires this.
 8. The signed thesis signature page, an electronic copy of the appropriately formatted thesis, and a thesis review fee must be submitted to Montezuma Publishing for formatting review. Information is available at: <https://www.montezumapublishing.com/sdsuthesisdissertation>
 9. Montezuma Publishing can only guarantee graduation if you submit your thesis at least 6 weeks before the official graduation date on the diploma. If your thesis is submitted after that time, it is possible that your diploma will be issued in the following semester. (Diplomas are issued only three times per year, not continuously.)
 10. Your thesis will be returned to you if formatting changes are needed. This is very common. Additional fees are required if 3 or more reviews are needed.
 11. Montezuma Publishing has a **strict publication deadline at precisely 3:45pm**, approximately two weeks before the official diploma date (the exact date varies by semester). Your thesis must be approved, paid for and published before 3:45pm on this day, or the degree cannot be issued until the following semester. This is a strict deadline without exceptions.
 12. Grading of 799A and 799B depends on the semester of thesis publication.
 - If a student is registered for 799A but the thesis is not published by the semester's deadline, a grade of "RP" is assigned to 799A. RP means "Report in Progress."
 - When the final version of the thesis (approved by Montezuma Publishing) is submitted, paid for, and published, a grade of Credit is issued for 799A. If an RP grade already exists, it will automatically be changed to Credit.

- Credit is issued for 799B if the final version of the thesis (approved by Montezuma Publishing) is submitted, paid for, and published by the publishing deadline that semester. If this does not happen, the 799B course has not been completed and a grade of NC (No Credit) is issued.
- After receiving an NC grade in 799B, students can register again for 799B in a future semester. A grade of NC is issued each time a 799B student does not get their thesis submitted to Montezuma Publishing by that semester's deadline.
- When credit is eventually issued for 799B, credit is also given retroactively for the outstanding RP in 799A as described above. However, students with multiple 799B NC grades across previous semesters will receive Credit only in the final 799B term. The other 799B grades will remain No Credit, since the 799B requirement (thesis approval) was not met in those semesters.
- Rarely, a 799B student will submit their thesis before the last day of the semester, but it doesn't get *published* until the following semester. In this case, an additional 799B registration in the next semester isn't required. However, the 799B grade will remain NC.

Transfer courses

A limited number of transfer units may be applied to a student's graduate degree. Transfer courses are referred to more technically as courses taken “out of matriculation.” For a student in a main campus graduate program, this would include all of the following:

1. SDSU Open University (main campus) courses taken before the student is formally enrolled in a main campus graduate program. These courses were taken before the student "matriculated" into their program. Each course must be reviewed and approved by the program's graduate advisor. (Note these are main campus courses, but enrollment is done through Global Campus).
2. All SDSU Global Campus courses. (Each must be reviewed and approved by the program's graduate advisor.)
3. Courses from other institutions. (Each must be reviewed and approved by the program's graduate advisor.)

Graduate students must appreciate that outside courses are viewed very differently in graduate vs. undergraduate degree programs. Courses from other universities are generally not used to fulfill graduate degree requirements. Acceptance of outside courses must be agreed on by both the graduate advisor and Graduate Studies, and approval is rare. This is fundamentally different from the way that outside courses are viewed by undergraduate degree advisors.

In cases where transfer courses may be applicable, each program's graduate advisor has the primary responsibility in reviewing course content and making a recommendation to Graduate Studies.

Course Repeats

Ordinarily, a graduate student may not repeat courses. However, with permission from Graduate Studies, a student may repeat one course on the official Program of Study in which a grade of C or lower has been earned. (Some programs have a higher minimum grade requirement; see your program's requirements as listed in the Catalog.) Course repeat petitions are sent to Graduate Studies by the program's graduate advisor. Repeated courses must be taken at SDSU and may not be taken for Credit / No Credit (Cr/NC). Requests to repeat a course should be initiated by the Graduate Advisor via a Petition for Academic Adjustment (PAAR).

When a graduate student repeats a course, both grades will remain on the student's transcripts and both grades will be calculated in all grade point averages. There is no "course forgiveness" policy for graduate students, with one rare exception. Upon appeal to the College of Graduate Studies (which must be requested by the graduate advisor), the first grade for a repeated course may be omitted from all GPA calculations *if* the first grade was WU.

Grade Changes

The instructor of record for a course has the privilege and responsibility to enter grades at the end of the semester. Only that instructor may make later grade changes, with one exception. Students may petition for retroactive withdrawal from a course if they experienced serious, compelling and unusual circumstances that were unknown at the start of that semester. Retroactive withdrawal options are available from the [SDSU Registrar's office](#).

Instructors who believe that a reported grade should be changed may contact Graduate Studies for instructions about the petition and approval process. In some cases, a written statement will be needed from both the instructor and the student.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

All matriculated students who will not attend SDSU during a fall or spring academic term must be approved for a Leave of Absence in order to remain matriculated and preserve eligibility for a future term. To access the Leave of Absence request, students must log in to the SDSU WebPortal and select the Leave of Absence link.

Do I need to apply for a LOA?

1. Yes, if you are in a main campus graduate program, are not registered for at least one main campus course, and wish to remain matriculated (active in your graduate program).
2. No, if you only need to apply for graduation, and will not take any additional courses.*
3. No, if you only need to take the comprehensive exam (or file the exam completion form with Graduate Studies) AND you will not be taking any more main campus classes before completing your degree. Check with Graduate Studies if you have questions about this situation.*
4. No, if you are registered for 799B or 799C through SDSU Global Campus and will not be taking any more main campus classes before completing your degree. Check with Graduate Studies if you have questions about this situation.*

* Note: You will lose access to your SDSU email account if you are no longer enrolled and have not taken a LOA.

What if I don't take any classes, and don't apply for a LOA?

You will lose matriculation at the beginning of the following semester, which means that you will no longer be considered a student. You will lose access to your SDSU email account. You will be required to file an application for readmission in order to take additional main campus classes.

Registration for 799B or 799C through SDSU Global Campus is an exception: Global Campus 799B / 799C do not maintain matriculation, and do not require matriculation.

How do I apply for a LOA?

1. Apply for a LOA through your my.SDSU account. A LOA will be granted if unavoidable circumstances prevent you from making progress in your degree program at this time.
2. A LOA may be requested for only one semester at a time. Students are generally expected to register for classes and resume their studies in the following semester. If LOA is approved, reapplication to the university is not necessary.
3. Students are not eligible for LOA if they are not in good standing with the university (for example: academic disqualification, or unpaid debts).

Limits to LOA

1. You are permitted to take a maximum of four semesters of LOA during your post-baccalaureate/graduate career.
2. Each LOA approval applies to only one semester. If an additional LOA is required in the following semester, a new application must be filed.
3. Students on LOA are expected to meet with their graduate advisor (and thesis advisor, if applicable) to develop a plan to complete their degree in a timely fashion. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that LOA will not interfere with the requirements for degree completion.
4. LOA semesters are included in degree time limits. All requirements for graduation must be completed within 6 consecutive calendar years (not academic years) after initial registration for a graduate program with < 36 units, and within 7 consecutive calendar years for programs with ≥ 36 units. This includes time spent on Leave of Absence and one-semester stop outs. This does not include time spent in compulsory service.

For example, in a 30-unit Master's program, a student beginning with Fall 2018 courses would need to finish by December 2024. This includes both coursework and the culminating experience (thesis, portfolio, project or comprehensive examination).

Grievance Procedures

Grievances related to a specific course

Students with grievances related to a specific course should first attempt to resolve them with the instructor. Both student and instructor are advised to document the request and response in writing (email is usually appropriate). If an agreeable solution is not found, the student should appeal to the instructor's supervisor (for a multi-section course) or the Department Chair or School Director. For graduate students, further appeals are directed to the Associate Dean of the academic College in which the course is taught. Final appeals (or further direction for complex cases) may be made to the university Ombudsman.

Grievances not course-related

Graduate students should see the Ombudsman in SSE 1105 or email <ombuds@sdsu.edu> for grievances concerning employment, sexual harassment, discrimination, fees/Student Account Services, or other offices within Student Services/Enrollment Services. The Ombudsman acts as the student

liaison or mediator, and is a confidential, independent, and neutral resource for students. The Ombudsman will direct students appropriately, depending on the specific issues.

Possible adjustments to published degree requirements must be recommended by the Graduate Advisor and approved by Graduate Studies. Appeals and grievances related to degree requirements may be directed to the or to the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies <Grad.AsstDean@sdsu.edu>.

Graduate students with grievances that do not fall into these special categories and are not course-related should first attempt to resolve the issue directly with the relevant faculty or staff member. A clearly articulated request sent by email will establish a written record. If there is no resolution, students may appeal to the Graduate Advisor, if appropriate. Depending on the nature of the grievance, students may then appeal to the Associate Dean of the academic College, or to the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies <Grad.AsstDean@sdsu.edu>. Additional information about grievance review may be found on the Ombudsman's website: http://go.sdsu.edu/student_Studies/ombudsman/Default.aspx

Campus Resources & Facilities

Graduate Student Association

Within Associated Students, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the group that focuses on the programmatic, policy and campus life needs of graduate students on the SDSU campus. The GSA plans and coordinates programming and events relevant to the SDSU graduate student experience. The GSA also advocates SDSU graduate students' concerns and perspectives including how the graduate student community might be affected by university policies, services, and programs. For more information visit: <https://as.sdsu.edu/gsa/>

Research with safety concerns, hazardous waste or ethical considerations

Many types of research require additional safety protocols, the generation of hazardous waste or ethical considerations. This includes research with carcinogenic chemicals, human subjects research, animal research, export control, and intellectual property. In these cases, your research protocols must be vetted and approved before you begin your project. Without proper review and documentation, you may put yourself and the university at legal risk.

- Do not assume that your research is so insignificant that proper review is unnecessary
- Do not assume that your thesis advisor or faculty mentor has conducted the proper protocol reviews for you. Discuss all details with them in your first semester as a graduate student.
- If you change your protocols after approval, obtain new approval.

For environmental hazards (including chemical handling and disposal), discuss with your department or building manager and visit the Environmental Health and Safety website: <http://bfa.sdsu.edu/ehs/>

Research with human subjects must be approved in advance by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). You will need IRB review and approval if you will obtain information from people (survey, interview, observation or experimentation), or you will analyze human information, records, tissues or samples previously collected by someone else. Visit https://research.sdsu.edu/research_affairs/human_subjects/guidance. Submit your protocol and obtain approval in advance of subject recruitment or analysis of existing data. After submission, you will be

sent an email verifying that the review is underway. Print this email and submit it with your thesis committee form and 799A registration. These forms can be processed simultaneously with the review. But note that all human subjects activities associated with theses, dissertations or intended for publication require approval by the IRB in advance of subject recruitment or analysis of existing data. If you do not obtain prior approval, your thesis cannot be published, and your degree will not be issued. Allow 4-6 weeks for IRB review. Contact the IRB at <irb@sdsu.edu> or 619-594-6622.

Research involving vertebrate animals must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Prior approval of protocol is required in advance of any work in the field or laboratory. This includes handling or observing vertebrate animals or their tissues. It may include research with vertebrate tissue samples, even if you did not personally collect them. Together with your research mentor/thesis advisor, submit your protocol for advanced review, and complete training modules. For initial inquiries, email <iacuc@sdsu.edu> email a brief description of your project including what you propose to do with vertebrate animals or their tissues, the reason for animal use, species, whether wild or laboratory, number of individuals, timeframe for the project and who your faculty sponsor/mentor/thesis advisor will be. See https://research.sdsu.edu/research_affairs/animal_care for additional information. Protocol approval and all necessary training must be completed prior to beginning work. Allow 4-8 weeks for IACUC review and approval. Contact the Animal Care and Use Program at 619-594-0905 with additional questions.

For other research-related issues including export control and intellectual property, see the Office of Research and Innovation website: <http://newscenter.sdsu.edu/researchStudies/default.aspx>

Student Health Services (non-emergency)

All regularly enrolled students prepay a health fee that is included in their registration fees. This entitles you to basic medical services through Student Health Services.

Student Health Services (SHS) is staffed by fully licensed and certified health professionals who are dedicated to the college community. No-cost or low-cost medical services include outpatient evaluation and treatment of common medical problems, preventive care, health counseling, immunizations and psychiatric treatment. Specialty care services including Dentistry, Optometry and Orthopedics are available for additional fees. All services are provided at their offices in the Calpulli Center (located near Viejas Arena). Appointments can be made by calling 619-594-4325. For information on available services, see their web site: <http://shs.sdsu.edu/index.asp>

Counseling and Psychological Services (non-emergency)

Students may obtain services from Counseling and Psychological Service, located in Calpulli Center 4401 (619-594-5220). For more information, see their web site: http://go.sdsu.edu/student_Studies/cps/Default.aspx

Emergency Health Services

Students who require immediate psychological help should call 619-594-5220 during business hours. After hours, students can call the San Diego Access and Crisis 24-hour Hotline at 800-479-3339, or the Student Health Services Nurse Advisory Line at 888-594-5281. For all other medical emergencies, call

911 from a campus phone. Student Health Services does NOT have an emergency room or trauma center.

Health insurance

Student Health Services is a primary care medical center but does not provide any inpatient services or other specialty services. The small Student Health Services fee on your bill each semester does not provide health insurance.

If you are employed on campus, your position might include health insurance and other benefits. Otherwise, please review the currently available options for SDSU domestic graduate students at <https://grad.sdsu.edu/current-students/insurance>. International students coordinate their health insurance through the [International Student Center](#).

Student Disability Services

Student Disability Services (SDS) – formerly Student Ability Success Center - is the campus office responsible for determining and providing appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Support services are available to students with certified visual limitations, hearing and communication impairments, learning disabilities, mobility, and other functional limitations. For more detailed information, please view <https://sds.sdsu.edu/> or contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473.

Public Safety

In addition to providing law enforcement and promoting a safe and secure environment, SDSU Public Safety offers services such as bike registration, Live Scan services, and training for crises, crime prevention and safety awareness. Additionally:

- Emergency blue light “duress phones” located throughout campus will give you immediate access to the SDSU police communication center in an emergency.
- The Red and Black Shuttle drives a loop around campus Monday through Friday, 6 PM – 10 PM during the fall and spring semesters.
- Students who are alone at night and need safe passage on campus can request a safety escort from a duress phone, or by calling (619) 594-6659.
- Students who have accessibility needs may also use the Red & Black and Library Shuttles. For more information, call (619) 594-6671 during the normal hours of shuttle operation. Student Disability Services may also be to assist students needing transportation to and from classes.

Library and Information Access

Library and Information Access supports the information, curricular and research needs of the university's diverse community through the widest possible range of resources. This includes information literacy, lifelong learning, and creative endeavors in a welcoming environment. The six-story Love Library, named after former SDSU President Malcolm A. Love, holds more than 6.4 million items among its collections. The library features student study rooms, a computing center, media center and much more.

Career Services

Through partnerships, education, and programming, Career Services empowers students and alumni to build bridges to their future careers. Career Services provides current Aztecs and Aztec alumni with many opportunities to define, develop and realize their career potential. They also work closely with employers and community partners to fill important staffing and internship positions from within the diverse and talented Aztec student body. See their website for more information:

<https://sacd.sdsu.edu/career>

International Student Center

The International Student Center (ISC) provides support and assistance to international students at San Diego State University. The ISC offers a full range of programs and services to foster student success, global perspectives, intercultural awareness and international cooperation. ISC has advisors to help guide students through immigration issues, so that they can maintain legal visa status and progress in their studies. For more information about the ISC services, see their website:

<https://www.sdsu.edu/international-student-center>

Veterans Center

The Veterans Center provides support and services to military, military veterans, military spouses, and dependent children. These include outreach/admission, GI Bill benefits, academic success, graduation, and career services. For more information, visit the Veterans Center in Student Services West 1661, or see their website: http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/veterans/resources_campus.html

Center for Intercultural Relations

The Center for Intercultural Relations researches, designs and implements unique programs that promote the appreciation of cultural diversity, and fosters intercultural and cross cultural understanding. They work with other university departments and colleges to conduct programs related to recruitment, orientation, retention and graduation of underrepresented student populations in addition to academic, personal, professional and cultural development. The Center for Intercultural Relations is located in the Conrad Prebys Aztec Student Union, Suite 250. See their website for more information:

http://go.sdsu.edu/student_Studies/intercultural/

Pride Center

The Pride Center creates, sustains, and strengthens an open, inclusive, safe, and affirming gathering space and campus environment for persons of all sexual and gender identities and their allies. For more information about the Pride Center, see their website: <https://sacd.sdsu.edu/pride>

Housing Administration and Residential Education

SDSU on-campus housing options generally cater to undergraduates, although some graduate student housing is available. Contact the Office of Housing Administration and Residential Education to find out about the current availability at (619) 594-5742 or <oha@sdsu.edu>. You can also see their website:

<https://housing.sdsu.edu/>

Economic Crisis Response Team (ECRT)

The Economic Crisis Response Team connects students with resources, both on and off campus for access to immediate food, housing, or financial resources during a time of crisis. Students can request assistance from ECRT using the form on their website: <https://sacd.sdsu.edu/ecrt> , or by emailing <ecrt@sdsu.edu>.

Office for Graduate Life and Diversity (GLAD)

The Office for Graduate Life and Diversity supports all graduate students' success and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion in the graduate programs at SDSU. They offer various personal, professional, financial, and social resources and programming to enrich the graduate experience and promote success. For more information, please visit: <https://sacd.sdsu.edu/gradlife>

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the contact information for Graduate Studies?

<gra@sdsu.edu>

College of Graduate Studies
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182-8220

Campus office: SSE 1410
Phone:(619) 594-5213
Fax: (619) 594-0189

2. What are the most important things a graduate student can do to be successful?

- Understand your degree requirements. Read through your degree requirements in the online University Catalog, and confirm them with your Graduate Advisor. For a list of all programs and advisors, please visit: <https://grad.sdsu.edu/current-students/advisor-list>
- Forge a positive and collegial relationship with at least one faculty member (usually your thesis advisor or the program's Graduate Advisor), who can act as your mentor.

3. How do I register for classes?

Registration for classes is completed online through my.SDSU. For my information, see: <https://registrar.sdsu.edu/students/registration/mysdsu-registration-guide>

4. What if my research involves hazardous materials, animals or humans (including surveys or interviews)?

See the above section titled Research with safety concerns, hazardous waste or ethical considerations.

5. What does it mean to be conditionally admitted?

See the above section titled Conditional Admission vs. Classified.

6. What is a Program of Study (POS), and can it be changed?

See the above section titled The Degree Evaluation and the Program of Study.

7. What does it mean to be Advanced to Candidacy?

See the above section titled Advancement to Candidacy.

8. How are formal complaints handled at the university?

See the above section titled Grievance Procedures.

9. Is graduation automatic once all degree requirements are completed?

No! See the above section titled Graduation.